

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SAJ-01 EB-11 FCSC-01 FRB-03 TRSE-00

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07

PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 USIA-15 OMB-01 NIC-01

DRC-01 /120 W

----- 080145

R 301520Z SEP 74

FM AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7046

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

C O N F I D E N T I A L PRAGUE 2440

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, EFIN, CZ, US

SUBJECT: CZECHOSLOVAK PRESS ON US

1. THE CZECHOSLOVAK PRESS HAS HAD A GAG PUT ON TO STOP ANY COMMENT AT ALL ON THE LONG-GRAVEL AMENDMENT. OFFICIALS HAVE TOLD US THAT THE LEADERSHIP DECIDED ANY COMMENT AT ALL MIGHT HURT RATHER THAN HELP, AND SINCE THEIR MAJOR HOPE IS TO DEFEAT THE AMENDMENT, THEY CHOSE SILENCE. WE HAVE OF COURSE ENCOURAGED THEM IN THIS.

2. ALONG WITH SILENCE ON THE AMENDMENT HAS COME WHAT WE TAKE TO BE CONSIDERABLE MODERATION ON US AFFAIRS IN GENERAL. OPPORTUNITIES FOR CRITICISM HAVE BEEN TREATED WITH CIRCUMSPECTION (E.G. THE CIA-IN-CHILE EPISODE WHICH THE

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SOVIET MEDIA AS REPORTED IN MOSCOW 14473 HAVE BEEN RUBBING AT WITH

GLEE). ZANTOVSKY (HEAD SIXTH DEPARTMENT MFA) TOLD CHARGE THAT AFTER WE TOOK UMBRAGE AT ONE ARTICLE BY MIKLOS KREJCI FROM WASHINGTON ON WATERGATE, THE ASSIGNED DUSAN ROVENSKY SPECIFICALLY TO DO A "BALANCING PIECE," WHICH ZANTOVSKY HELPED ROVENSKY PREPARE. OF COURSE CZECHOSLOVAK PRESS, LIKE SOVIET AND OTHER EE PRESS, IS NOT IGNORING CHILE, CYPRUS, AND THE LIKE, AND "IMPERIALISM" STILL BECOMES "AMERICAN IMPERIALISM" IN SOME STORIES ON THESE AREAS, VIETNAM AND SO ON. BUT WE GATHER THESE TRENDS ARE REFLECTED IN REST OF EE PRESS. WE GET SOME VERY GOOD STORIES TOO---E.G./ STORY IN TECHNICAL PRESS WRITTEN BY EMBOFF, EXCELLENT COLOR LAYOUT ON MRS. LOUIS ARMSTRONG VISIT, WRITEUP OF BRICKLIN AUTOMOBILE. BY AND LARGE, EMBASSY BELIEVES PRESS HERE HAS TREATED US RELATIVELY WELL IN RECENT DAYS.

3. WE WILL NOT BE SURPRISED IF THIS ATTITUDE CHANGES SHOULD THE LONG-GRAVEL AMENDMENT BECOME LAW. ONE MFS OFFICIAL TOLD EMBOFF THAT THIS WOULD BE THE CASE IN ALL LIKELIHOOD, BECAUSE NON-RETURN OF THE GOLD LOOTED FROM CZECHOSLOVAKIA BY THE NAZIS WAS TOO EMOTIONAL AND SYMBOLIC AN ISSUE TO LET LIE. CONVERSELY, IF WE SUCCEED IN SIGNING THE CLAIMS AGREEMENT, AND THE GOLD IS RETURNED, WE DO BELIEVE THE GROUND WOULD BE WELL PREPARED FOR EFFORTS TO MAINTAIN MORE BALANCED CZECHOSLOVAK PRESS REPORTING ON US EVENTS. THE PRESSURE TO CONFORM TO THE MOSCOW PRESS LINE ON NON-BILATERAL MATTERS CLEARLY REMAINS VERY GREAT, HOWEVER. WE KNOW THAT THE AUTHORITIES ARE AT LEAST WELL AWARE OF HOW CLOSELY WE WATCH WHAT THEY SAY IN THE PRESS, AND THAT IS A GOOD STARTING POINT.
PERRY

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